

Calvin Soule

Exploring Maine Farms: Community, Practices, and Food

This summer I had the privilege of doing exploratory research with support from the Breckinridge Summer Research Fellowship. Under the guidance of Dr. Shana Starobin and with my research partner Lauren Hickey ('20), my research focused on a wide variety of Maine farms. While the approach was originally very specific to food sovereignty, our research team decided quickly that it was more worthwhile to make this a long-term project. First, Lauren and I needed some research experience, so we started off visiting local farms and practicing good research skills, with Dr. Starobin's help. After an intensive week of learning and touring, Lauren and I started to orient ourselves to the Maine Food system. We traveled to local midcoast farms, volunteered at hunger prevention programs, talked to statewide food organizations, went to blueberry field days in down east Maine, spoke with immigrant farmers, and much more.

Along these adventures, I sharpened my research skills and attuned myself to what good research is. This included learning how to ask good, provocative questions, how to take efficient notes as I walked around the farm, how to use pictures to capture data, how to listen, how to transcribe, how to organize